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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: PDAS CAMP'S MEETINGS WITH UZBEK FOREIGN MINISTER  
AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Classified By: P-E Chief Nicholas Berliner for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: SCA PDAS Donald Camp met with Uzbek Foreign Minister (FM) Norov and National Security Advisor (NSA) Atayev during an October 28-29 visit to Tashkent. Camp exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan, pushing back on Uzbek statements that the solution to the problems of both countries is the installation of a "strong man" in the leadership. He also discussed human rights, telling the Uzbeks that the U.S. wants to work with them in a constructive dialogue, stressing that the upcoming transition in Washington is a key moment when views about Uzbekistan will be formed. Norov, as he is apt to do, hewed largely to familiar Uzbek positions of "no double standards" when it comes to human rights issues, complaining that Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries are held to a different standard than Uzbekistan. Atayev, on the other hand, perhaps reflecting the confidence of his proximity to President Karimov, spoke more openly. He acknowledged that Uzbekistan has problems in the areas of human rights and democracy, citing several cases specifically. He said that Uzbekistan wants a partnership with the U.S. and, as a young country, needs time to work through these issues. Atayev also expressed hope for an agreement on transit arrangements for Afghanistan. End Summary.

No Uzbek Confidence in Karzai

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¶2. (C) SCA PDAS Camp exchanged views with Uzbek FM Norov and NSA Atayev on the situation in Afghanistan. Both Norov and Atayev pitched the Uzbek proposal for a 6 plus 3 format to discuss the future of Afghanistan that President Karimov mooted during the April Bucharest NATO Summit, emphasizing that Uzbekistan does not believe a military solution to the problems in Afghanistan exists. They characterized Afghan President Karzai as being little more than the mayor of Kabul and suggested that Afghanistan could only be stabilized through the imposition of a "strong man" with broad national appeal to replace Karzai. Atayev expressed skepticism on the possible role of an expanded Afghan National Army, noting that the Soviet Union had trained entire divisions who later joined the ranks of Mujahadeen fighters. Norov pointed to weakening public support for participation in ISAF in European countries to underscore the need to find more effective leadership for Afghanistan. Atayev mused that change in Afghanistan "will take centuries." PDAS Camp

countered that Karzai is the elected leader of Afghanistan and there is no possibility to exclude his government from discussions on Afghanistan's future. He pointed out that, while he agreed that economic development had to be a priority, there was no possibility for development without security, adding that very few Afghans would want to see a return of the Taliban to power.

¶3. (C) Norov and Atayev also expressed skepticism about a Saudi-led initiative aimed at bringing Taliban elements into a dialogue with the Afghan Government. Norov said the Iranians would never accept any Saudi-led initiative, as this would run counter to their belief that they are now the pre-eminent regional power in the Middle East. He said the Russians would also oppose this initiative. Camp assured Norov that there was less than met the eye in the recent meeting in Riyadh with already-reconciled Taliban like former foreign minister Muttawakil.

#### Concern About Pakistan

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¶4. (C) Turning to Pakistan, Camp conveyed U.S. concerns about developments there, particularly in the economic sphere, citing Pakistan's urgent need to conclude an agreement with the IMF in the face of dwindling foreign exchange reserves and impending economic crisis. He also spoke about the ongoing problem of terrorists finding safe haven in the Tribal Areas. The Uzbek side shared these concerns. Atayev pointed out that Pakistan was Uzbekistan's closest point of access to the open sea and anything that happened there could have repercussions throughout the region. He said that Pakistan had become more radicalized

over the past decades and was now more extreme than Iran, bringing forth a situation in which even the smallest mistake could result in catastrophic consequences. Both Norov and Atayev expressed admiration for former Pakistani President Musharraf, doubting that the current leadership could successfully avert a full-blown crisis in the country. Atayev also underscored the importance of the Pakistani military taking actions against extremists in the border regions, saying that U.S. strikes would only aggravate the situation and weaken the Pakistani government further.

#### Human Rights and Relations with the United States

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¶5. (C) Camp also raised human rights and Uzbek-U.S. relations, telling his GOU interlocutors that the U.S. seeks a constructive dialogue with Uzbekistan across a range of issues. The meeting with Norov took a familiar turn when this issue was raised. When Camp mentioned the case of jailed oppositionist Sanjar Umarov, Norov retorted that Umarov was not an opposition figure at all, but rather a common criminal who embezzled eight million dollars. He went on to criticize what he termed a double standard, citing the Secretary's recent praise of Kazakhstan in the face of similar types of democratic shortcomings that characterize Uzbekistan and the killings of journalists in neighboring Kyrgyzstan.

¶6. (C) Atayev took a more considered approach. Noting that he detected a change in tone in relations with the U.S., Atayev said that it was Uzbekistan's intention to develop relations with the U.S. in all spheres, including security, human rights, democracy, military cooperation and non-proliferation. Perhaps hoping to anticipate Camp's points, Atayev himself raised the names of Umarov and other arrested activists, saying that he recognized that Uzbekistan could not ignore these issues. He said that the Uzbek leadership knows what needs to be done and that a lot has been achieved in seventeen years, but more time is needed. He maintained that much of the legal framework was in place in Uzbekistan to support democracy, but that civil society was still not sufficiently developed.

¶7. (C) Camp told both Norov and Atayev that the coming period would be critical for U.S.-Uzbek relations with the change of administration in Washington. He suggested that

actions taken now could have a significant impact on the views that will take shape during the transition about the future direction of U.S.-Uzbek relations. Norov and Atayev seemed to appreciate the importance of this point.

#### Afghanistan Transit

¶18. (C) Atayev told Camp that the GOU was eager to assist on transit for Afghanistan and looked forward to seeing specific proposals from the U.S. side in the near future. He also indicated that the GOU expected to reach an "agreement" with the U.S. on this issue, suggesting that the Uzbek side views any transit arrangement as being larger than a purely commercial endeavor.

#### Comment

¶19. (C) Atayev's apparent frankness on the question of human rights and democracy was refreshing after Norov's timid boorishness. Apart from personality differences, this probably reflects the relative security conferred upon Atayev by his proximity to President Karimov. Norov tends to hew more closely to standard GOU talking points and, on more than one occasion, has appeared marginalized by the GOU leadership surrounding Karimov. Atayev is a more effective interlocutor for the GOU, although he too does not stray far from the regime's dogma, as he revealed in his apparent reference to jailed opposition figure Sanjar Umarov as one of those who "act for material gain under the cover of democracy without the interests of the country at heart."

¶10. (U) PDAS Camp has cleared this telegram.  
NORLAND